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A MISSISSIPPI VIEW OF RACE RELATIONS IN THE SOUTH.

BY DUNBAR ROWLAND.

Director of Department of Archives and History.

Read before the Alumni Association of the University of Mississippi, June 3rd 1902.

The purpose of all investigation should be to elicit truth. It is therefore the object of this discussion to give a truthful, accurate and unprejudiced statement of facts about the political, social and industrial relations of the white man and the negro in the South. It is to be desired that not even an allusion shall be made that may raise a feeling of sectional prejudice in the breasts of any.

There are few men not of the South who can appreciate the sad trials of the past, or realize the dangerous problems of the future. Some may see the true nobility, calm dignity and Spartan fortitude which the South has shown in meeting her responsibilities, few know what they really mean. The wrongs and mistakes of the past would have driven a less proud and noble race into anarchy.

When the perilous problems of the South are better understood, when the clouds which political passion create are swept away by a sincere sympathy and a desire to lend a helping hand, when a friendly interest takes the place of unfriendly criticism, when what is right is the aim of all then and not until then can pressing problems be intelligently solved.

The great body of the people of this Republic want to do right, They want to deal justly. The Southern people know the negro and understand him, let them work out and solve the serious problems surrounding them in a way which shall be of advantage to both races.

The social, political and industrial conditions which now exist in the South can only be properly appreciated by taking a brief backward view of what has gone before.

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From early colonial times to 1860 the South was a garden for the cultivation of all that was grand in oratory, true in science sublime and beautiful in poetry and sentiment, and enlightened and profound in law and statemanship. That period produced a roll too long to read of noble spirits, bright wits and great scholars, whose names and deeds are preserved in the archives of the nation's glory. From the Potomac to the Rio Grande the Southern gentleman held sway. The South was looked upon by its lordly owners as the most favored spot on earth. It was called the Fair Land by those who owned it and loved it. Ruin and desolation came upon this fair land and its people.

The boom of batteries in the harbor of Charleston on a beautiful April day in 1861 was the beginning of a bloody fraternal strife which laid desolate the happy homes of the people everywhere, brought about the sacrifice of a half million lives and cost the country ten billions of money. The war between the Confederate States and the United States brought about the greatest political and social revolution known to history. That revolution brought political, industrial and financial ruin upon the South. When peace came a race of servile slaves were made masters of her political destiny.

The Anglo Saxon has never bowed his head to the yoke of an inferior race and he never will. We see now that it was cruel to condemn a brave though fallen people to the suffering and humiliation which became their portion. The enfranchisement of the negro was a mistake. It was a stupendous blunder, and is now recognized as such by thoughtful students of events everywhere.

After the negro had been clothed with the right of suffrage the Southern people made an honest effort to give him a fair trial. If he proved to be a worthy citizen the fears of the people would be groundless.

The Confederate States had given up their struggle for an independent nationality upon a basis of freedom for the negro race. While the best and most thoughtful men of the South believed that the experiment of negro suffrage would ruin the country and prove fatal to the negroes they knew that the trial must be made. They felt that they were bound to the soil of the South for life, and they wanted to sleep in its bosom after 5 death. They tried to make that noble sentiment, which a great man has given the world, their guide: "He who does the best his circumstances allow does well, acts nobly; angels could not do more."

The South had suffered through four years of war. The blood of the best and bravest had deluged the land. The whitened bones of her sons lay upon the hilltops of Virginia and were strewn over the fertile valleys of Mississippi. The people thought that they had suffered enough. The bitter and humiliating chalice of negro rule was yet to be pressed to their lips.

At the end of the war there was no ill will against the negro in the hearts of the Southern people. The following extract from the charge of Judge Clayton of Alabama to the grand jury of Pike County, made September 9th, 1866, shows the prevailing statement:

"Gentlemen, do we owe the negro any grudge? What has he himself done to provoke our hostility? Shall we be angry with him because freedom has been forced upon him? Shall it excite our animosity because he has been suddenly and without an effort on his part torn loose from the protection of a kind master? He is proud to call you master yet. In the name of humanity let him do so. He may have been the companion of your boyhood. He may be older than you and perhaps carried you in his arms when an infant. You may be bound to him by a thousand ties which only the Southern man knows, and which he alone can feel in all its force. It may be that when only a few years ago you girded on your cartridge box and shouldered your trusty rifle to go to meet the invaders of your country, you committed to his care your home and your loved ones, and when you were far away upon the weary march, upon the dreadful battle field, in the trenches and on the picket line, many and many a time you thought of that faithful old negro and your heart warmed toward him."

There was at the end of the war and is now a strong and steadfast affection between the old slaves of the South and their former masters. If that feeling of confidence had been allowed to continue without the evil influence of the carpetbagger all would have been well. The Southern white man is the only man on earth who understands the negro character, and he is the only man who is now fitted to solve the intricate race relations of the future.

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The reconstruction period found the negro free. His freedom was not the result of his own efforts, although in most instances it was his desire to be free. By reason of the entire absence of self-

reliance, his want of experience and his failure to understand or appreciate his changed condition, the negro alter his emancipation was helpless. At this critical time the carpet-bagger invaded the South intent upon nothing but gain. At best the pathway toward better things was blocked by many difficulties. The coming of the carpet bagger and the evil influence he gained over the negro, by causing him to lose faith in his best friends, was the crowning sorrow and humiliation of the South.

The picture of conditions existing in the South during the period of reconstruction may strike those who know nothing of it as too dark. Some thinking and impartial men of the North are inclined to believe that Southern men overdraw the darkness of the night of reconstruction. At this time—twenty-five years after—in the light of the facts of history the student of that period, whose opinions are not embittered by the trials of the times, stands in astonishment and marvels at the patience and long suffering of a brave and chivalrous people. Therefore the unprejudiced reader will be in sympathy with a brief, impartial account of reconstruction conditions.

Reconstruction was the creation of men who knew nothing of conditions surrounding the negro. Instead of adapting him to his new life the measures of reconstruction made the negro a discontented enemy of good government. The story of the trials of reconstruction is told not with a spirit of bringing reproach on the men who made them possible by unwise legislation, or by way of apology for the people of the South, but from a purely historical standpoint giving the facts minus prejudiced opinion. The debates in Congress pending the passage of reconstruction measures clearly show that the most conservative and self-contained men of the party then in power were opposed to universal manhood suffrage for the negro. That President Lincoln was opposed to manhood suffrage for the negro is now a well established fact of history. The evidence upon which that statement rests, in addition to Mr. Lincoln's 7 own statements, is a letter written by Mr. McCulloch, who was Secretary of the Treasury in the cabinet of President Lincoln and later filled the some office for President Johnson and President Arthur. Secretary McCulloch says:

“It was, I know, the opinion of Mr. Lincoln and other friends of the colored race—it certainly was mine—that some qualification, such as the ownership of taxable property, the ability to read and write or both, should have been required for the exercise of the right to vote, as an inducement for the acquisition of what is needful on the part of self-governing people.”

Previous to the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment there was not a Northern state where the negro had the right to vote. Mr. Garfield wanted an intelligent negro suffrage. He said during the reconstruction debates on that question:

I regret that we have not found the situation of affairs in this country such, and the public virtue such, that we might come out on the plain, unanswerable proposition that every adult intelligent citizen of the United States, unconvicted of crime, should enjoy the right of suffrage."

Senator Fessenden, of Maine, a very able man, one of the leaders of the Republican party and a member of the reconstruction committee, said in the Senate on the question of negro suffrage:

I think the honorable Senator from Massachusetts, himself, (Mr. Sumner) who is the great champion of universal suffrage, would hardly contend that now at this time the whole mass of the population of the recent slave states is fit to be admitted to the exercise of the right of suffrage. I presume that no man who looks dispassionately and calmly would contend that the great mass of those who were recently slaves [undoubtedly there may be exceptions] and who have been kept in ignorance all their lives, oppressed more or less, forbidden to acquire information, are fit at this day to exercise the right of suffrage or could be trusted to do it.

Such statements show that the great leaders of the Republican party long after the war had the correct idea of negro suffrage. If such was the opinion of these great and good men, why was it not made the policy of the Republican party? Why was negro suffrage finally determined upon? The only conclusion to which the student of the situation can come is that negro suffrage was adopted as a partisan political measure intended for the perpetuation of political power.

The political situation in Washington in 1867 was exactly suited to bring about the evils of partisan legislation. There was only one party represented at the Capitol. There was no voice there to plead the cause of the people upon whom the ruin of negro rule would fall. They were at home silent and waiting, hoping that the evil might be averted. The extreme radicals of the Republican party, led by Sumner and Stevens prevailed and the reconstruction bill became a law on the 2nd of March, 1867. The negro was made an unwilling instrument for the oppression and humiliation of his best friends. He was made the controlling political influence in the South. He placed himself under the leadership of men who poisoned his mind with a spirit of misrule, and who taught him to mistrust and hate his former masters.

The bitter humiliation of negro domination was borne with fortitude and patience. Under such conditions property was insecure. There was open and notorious plunder without the hope of redress. Ignorance, crime and hatred enthralled the white people. No such evil had ever before been put upon a suffering section. It seemed as if the wheels of civilization had been turned back a thousand years. Ignorant and vicious negroes filled the most important positions of honor and trust.

They became county officers, members of the legislature, state officers, members of Congress and United States senators.

The long continued rule of ignorance and vice could only have one result—the ruin of the country and the confiscation of all property by the power of taxation. The people of the South faced that condition after seven years of negro rule. What did they do to remedy it?. They did exactly what the Anglo Saxon would have done under like conditions, no matter whether they existed in Mississippi, in Massachusetts, in England or in Germany. They met together in council and after mature and thoughtful deliberation, they pledged their honor, fortune and lives to rid themselves and their posterity from the blight of black supremacy; by peaceful means, if possible, by force if necessary.

The struggle between white and black began. It was a time of deep emotion and intense feeling all over the South. livery white man swore a solemn oath before high Heaven that 9 he would free himself and his posterity from the disgrace of negro rule or die in the attempt. That idea was the battle cry. The people felt that they were struggling against infamy and dishonor. They felt that the peace of their homes, the safety of their wives and the happiness of their children depended on the result. Lawyers left their law books, doctors their patients, preachers their sermons, merchants their stores and farmers their fields and formed themselves into a mighty force for the overthrow of misrule. During the time of such intense feeling and excitement many mistakes were made, many irreparable wrongs were committed and many innocent lives were lost. Truth and candor can now deal with that time. It was a time of revolution when the wishes of wise leaders were often set aside to give way to the passions of the hour. There were frequent armed conflicts between the races, and the negroes always suffered most from them. They were armed and incited to violence by their white leaders who deserted them in time of peril. The issues of that remarkable campaign were clear and well defined, and were:

First. The negro has proven himself unworthy of suffrage, and it should be taken from him.

Second. Negro rule is ruinous to a State.

Third. The honest, intelligent people of a state should control it.

Fourth. Negro suffrage had been given a fair trial with terrible results.

Fifth. Freedom could not in a moment transform an ignorant man into an intelligent citizen.

Sixth. The negro was being made a tool in the hands of thieves and plunderers.

Seventh. There was not a state under negro rule that showed even a trace of honest intelligent, government.

Eighth. That existing conditions must be overthrown at whatever cost.

The negroes were told plainly that they would not be allowed to vote and it would be best for them not to attempt it. There was no concealment. The men who guided the movement in 10 the various states of the South had the courage to declare that black supremacy must come to an end.

The leaders of that revolution were John B. Gordon of Georgia, L. Q. C. Lamar and James Z. George, of Mississippi, A. H. Garland, of Arkansas, Isham G. Harris, of Tennessee, John T. Morgan, of Alabama, James B. Eustis, of Louisiana, Wade Hampton, of South Carolina, Richard Coke of Texas, and Zebulon B. Vance, of North Carolina. They belong to the eternal honor roll of the South, and their names shall be remembered after the monuments of marble and tablets of brass which mark the last testing place of many of them shall have crumbled into dust.

In Mississippi the struggle was bitter and bloody. Adelbert Ames, the Republican Governor of the State, in his desperation over impending disaster, applied to the Federal Government at Washington for United States troops to be used in terrorizing the people on election day. He is reported to have declared that the death of a few hundred negroes would make sure the success of the Republican party. Bloody riots occurred at Clinton, Yazoo City and Vicksburg, in which many negroes and some white men were killed. President Grant refused to send Federal troops into Mississippi, and his refusal was based on the report of Mr. C. K. Chase, an agent of the Attorney General of the United States, who had been sent to report on the application of Governor Ames for troops. His report being that there was no legal excuse for the presence of armed men. It was a struggle in which the forces of honesty and intelligence were arrayed against those of dishonesty and ignorance.

There could only be one result in the battle for the mastery between the white man and the negro; the negro must give way. The fight was fought and won. The South was redeemed. The Southern people exercised the right of revolution to free themselves. They used force, the only means in their power to overthrow misrule, corruption and dishonesty. The negroes were thoroughly beaten by the revolution of 1875. They never again attempted to vote in large numbers.

A period of mild intimidation continued for fourteen years. That method of preserving white supremacy was never entirely satisfactory, and Southern leaders and statesmen were anxious to remove the menace of future trouble by constitutional means. It was believed that the continued

suppression of the negro vote would promote a feeling among the whites to use the same methods on each other and promote a low tone of political morality.

The movement to disfranchise the negro vote by legal means began in Mississippi under the leadership of Gen. James Z. George. The movement rapidly became popular, and Mississippi provided for a Constitutional Convention in 1890. Gen. George, the leader of the demand for white supremacy by legal means, was a United States Senator from Mississippi, and one of the great constitutional lawyers of the country. He was a rugged, honest, able and thoughtful man of the humble walks of life, who had carved out a brilliant career from a beginning of poverty and want. Senator George was born in Monroe county, Georgia, October 20th, 1826. His father died when his son was an infant, and his mother moved to the new State of Mississippi that her boy might have a better chance in life. The mother first found a home in Noxubee county, and lived there until her son was ten years old. They then moved to Carroll county, in 1836, and it became the life-long home of the man who was destined to lead the people of his adopted State out of the darkness and doubt of a suppressed negro vote into the light and freedom of a suffrage founded on justice and right and in keeping with constitutional law and liberty. The childhood and young manhood of James Z George, like that of so many great men, was passed in genteel poverty, without the advantages which wealth can bestow and without the culture which education gives. He was not trained in the learning of the schools. He was poor. Victor Hugo, the great Frenchman, who made the world better by having lived in it, says that "Poverty is the greatest of opportunities." The men who dominated the world in the past—the great world leaders and nation makers—were not "clothed in fine linen, faring sumptuously every day"; they toiled to the light through the darkness of poverty. Senator George was one of those men

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"Who breaks his birth's invidious bar, And grasps the skirts of happy chance, And breasts the blows of circumstance, And grapples with his evil star."

The Constitutional Convention of 1890 met in Jackson, Mississippi, for the purpose of giving the State a new organic law. The convention was composed of the best men in Mississippi. Among the leaders and master minds of the body were James Z George, S.S. Calhoon, Edward Mayes, H. F. Simrall, J. L. Alcorn and W. P. Harris. Judge Calhoon was an eminent jurist of the State, and he became President of the Convention. Edward Mayes was a law professor, Chancellor of the State University, and the most learned lawyer in the State. Judge Simrall was an ex-Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. He was a clean Republican, and represented a Democratic constituency. Governor Alcorn was the most prominent Republican in the State. He had been Governor, a United States Senator, and was a

forceful man of high character. Judge Harris was the leading lawyer of the Mississippi bar. He was able, thoughtful and brave, and did very active work in the Convention.

The avowed and confessed object of the convention was to eliminate the ignorant vote whether white or black. Every thoughtful man in the convention knew the terrible results of placing political power in ignorant, incompetent hands.

Universal suffrage could not succeed where there was an electorate of sixty per cent. who were illiterate. The experiment had been tried with terrible results in other nations. In 1793 France founded a Republic based on universal manhood suffrage. It went down in a sea of blood and became a military despotism in 1800. The experiment was tried again in 1848. In 1852 they returned to a despotism of military power. There could be no other result when more than one-half the voters could not read their ballots. Spain has passed through the same experience. The Republic of Castellar, built on an ignorant white rabble, passed away in a few months to give place to the old ruinous rule of the Bourbons, South America is full of little republics resting on an ignorant suffrage. They are in a perpetual state of revolution, and such conditions will continue until they have an intelligent ballot.

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The franchise section of the Mississippi Constitution of 1890 provides an educational qualification and requires payment of all taxes for two years before the election, and it eliminates all ignorant, votes regardless of color, who cannot measure up to the test. The educational test is not exacting and only involves the power to read. It places the right to vote as a reward in the reach of the negro, which may be gained by effort. The negroes are slowly qualifying themselves to become voters, and there is no disposition anywhere to prevent them from doing so. If the negro is made to earn his full citizenship by his own efforts it will teach him to take pride in it.

Under the Mississippi system the disfranchisement of a few whites was unavoidable, but it was thought that they should pay the penalty of ignorance rather than endanger the safety of the State. The whites who were disfranchised accepted the situation without a murmur.

Five other Southern states have followed the lead of Mississippi in framing a new organic law for the purpose of disfranchising the ignorant voter. These states are South Carolina, North Carolina, Alabama, Louisiana and Virginia. These states adopted the Mississippi plan of an educational qualification, and in addition incorporated in their constitutions the famous "grandfather clause," which prevents the disfranchisement of any whites whatever. That clause of these constitutions provides that all male descendants of those who were voters before 1868, shall continue to exercise the right to vote regardless of the required educational qualifications.

Here are the franchise sections of the Mississippi Constitution of 1890:

Sec. 241.—Every male inhabitant of this State, except idiots, insane persons, and Indians not taxed, who is a citizen of the United States, twenty-one years old and upwards, who has resided in this State two years and one year in the election district, or in the incorporated city or town in which he offers to vote, and who is duly registered as provided in this article, and who has never been convicted of bribery, burglarly, theft, arson, obtaining money or goods under false pretense, perjury, forgery, embezzlement, or bigamy, and who has paid, on or before the first day of February of the year in which he shall offer to vote, all taxes which may have been legally required of him, and, which he has had an opportunity 14 of paying according to law, for the two preceding years, and who shall produce to officers holding the election satisfactory evidence that he has paid said taxes, is declared to be a qualified elector; but any minister of the gospel in charge of an organized church shall be entitled to vote after six month's residence in the election district, if otherwise qualified.

Section 242 relates to registration of voters.

Sec. 243—A uniform poll tax of two dollars, to be used in aid of the common schools, and for no other purpose, is hereby imposed on every male inhabitant of this State between the ages of twenty-one and sixty years, except persons who are deaf and dumb or blind, or who are maimed by loss of hand or foot; said tax to be a lien only upon taxable property. The board of supervisors of any county may, for the purpose of aiding the common schools in that county, increase the poll tax in said county, but in no case shall the entire poll tax exceed in any one year three dollars on each poll. No criminal proceedings shall be allowed to enforce the collection of the poll tax.

Sec. 244—On and after the first day of January, A.D., 1892, every elector shall, in addition to the foregoing qualifications, be able to read any section of the constitution of this State; or he shall be able to understand the same when read to him, or give a reasonable interpretation thereof. A new registration shall be made before the next ensuing election after January the first, A.D. 1892.

It will be observed that the foregoing does not disfranchise the negro any more than it does the white man. It simply means that the citizen—black or white—who will not pay all taxes, including the “uniform poll tax of two dollars, to be used in aid of the common school,” on or before the first day of February in which he offers to vote, and who is not intelligent enough to read any section of the State constitution, or to understand the same when read to him, or give a reasonable interpretation thereof, shall not be allowed to vote. In other words, he voluntarily disfranchises himself for the period named. In the case of the poll tax, it will be noticed that no “criminal proceedings shall be allowed to enforce its collections.” The only penalty is that the delinquent cannot vote. And the

registration statistics of the several counties show that there are thousands of whites as well as blacks who thus disqualify themselves. And the fact that the poll tax is a school fund. and that it cannot be otherwise applied, makes this delinquency all the more to be regretted.

The new suffrage departure of Mississippi was the subject of much discussion in political and legal circles in Washington during the winter of 1890–91. It was made the subject of violent partisan attacks in the Senate. Senators Hoar, Spooner, Hawley and Edmunds denounced it as in conflict with the amendments of the Federal Constitution clothing the negro with the right of suffrage. Senators Hoar and Edmunds were 15 generally regarded as autocrats on questions of constitutional law, and they brought all the resources at their command in their attacks on the new organic law of the State of Mississippi.

Senator George was in his seat in the Senate as the defender and champion of the new charter of white supremacy. He was equipped for the forensic battle. He was ready with the truth. He was armed with courage to meet all comers, He began his celebrated speech in defense of the Mississippi Constitution on the 31st day of December 1890. He had been a member of the Senate nine years and was known to be an authority on questions of constitutional law. While his ability was recognized, the reserve force of the man was unknown to his associates in the Senate, There was great responsibility resting upon him. He was the chosen champion of the Southern crusade against ignorance at the ballot box. He had been t he chief agent in the construction of the organic law which lifted the fatal shirt of Nessus from the shoulders of the Southern people. If he failed, the people he loved would suffer. If he gained the victory, future generations yet unborn would rise up and call him blessed. His defense was conclusive. It was overwhelmingly convincing. The great Senator showed a more intimate knowledge of the constitutions of Massachusetts, Vermont and Connecticut than did the Senators who represented those states. It was one of the great constitutional law speeches of the Senate, and will take rank in the future with Webster's superb speech in defense of the Constitution. All of the contentions of Senator George were afterwards crystalized into law by the Supreme Court of the United States in the case of Wflliams v. Mississippi. The decision of that case forever settled the question of negro suffrage. It was decided April 25, 1898.

Henry Williams, a negro, was indicated for murder in Washington County, Mississippi, by a grand jury, made up entirely of white men. A motion was made to quash the indictment on the ground that the laws by which the grand jury was selected, that presented the indictment were unconstitutional or repugnant to the Constitution of the United States and of the 14th amendment. It was a direct attack on the franchise clause creating electors and raised a Federal question which enabled 16 Williams to carry the case to the Supreme Court of the United States. Williams was tried by a jury

composed entirely of white men and convicted. A motion for a new trial was denied and Williams was sentenced to be hanged. An appeal to the supreme court of the State was taken and the judgment of the court below was affirmed. The case was then taken to the supreme court of the United States and Justice McKenna delivered the opinion. The question presented to the court was, "Are the Provisions of the Constitution of the State of Mississippi and the Laws Enacted to Enforce Them Repugnant to the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States?" The court held that there was no conflict and no discrimination between the races. It was decided that equal protection of the laws was not denied to colored persons by a State constitution and laws which make no discrimination against the colored race in terms but which grant a discretion to certain officers which can be used to the abridgment of the rights of colored persons to vote and serve on juries, when it is not shown that their actual administration is evil, but only that evil is possible under them.

In dealing with the race problem it must be born in mind that it is the curing power of time aided by intelligent human effort which can cure the ills of the past and promote the good results of the future, The growth of social and political conditions is always slow. It requires generations to make changes for good or evil. It must be remembered that the negro has behind him six thousand years of ignorance and barbarism. Universal suffrage can safely exist only where there is universal education.

Out of the mass of conflicting opinions there have come two great ideas about which there is no difference of opinion in the South. The first is the necessity for the absolute social separation and isolation of the negro. He will never be accepted as an equal no matter how great his future advancement. He may gain the culture of the schools and acquire something of the polish of polite society, but he can never beat down the barriers between white and black.

The demands of civilization must be obeyed.

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The second settled conviction is that the negro will never again be allowed to control the public affairs of a single Southern state.

Good government demands that position.

If there is no higher motive than self interest; that demands that the Southern people do everything in their power to make the negro an industrious, honest, self-supporting citizen. If the people of the North will help them do that in a fair sympathetic way their aid will always be welcomed.

There are thoughtful men in the South who have lost faith in the power of the education which has heretofore been given to uplift the negro, and there is reason in their position, but public sentiment still clings to the school houses and to industrial education as the only hope of the future.

Here is what Gov. Longino, in his inaugural address, says upon this subject:

There is no danger so great to the affairs of any republic as an ignorant factious citizenship, whose tendencies have always been to overturn social order, political system, liberty, justice and right. Mississippi's greatest relief from this source of evil has been for many years found in the efficiency of her free schools and her colleges. The liberality, therefore of the legislature in the past, in providing funds for their proper maintenance, has been both wise and patriotic, and I heartily commend the continuation of the same liberal spirit toward all the State's educational interests and institutions. The free school fund is now distributed among the counties per capita of the educable children in each. The relative attendance upon the free schools in the white is much greater than in the black counties, and hence, by reason of the fewer schools required for the accommodation of the attending pupils in the black counties affords those counties the use of the funds set apart to the non-attending children therein; hence, those counties are enabled from said fund to extend the term of their schools taught and to pay teachers better salaries than can the white counties where the larger proportion of the children attended the schools. Since the manifest purpose of the law is to favor equal educational facilities to all of the children of the State alike, I would commend to the legislature the submission of an amendment to section 206 of the constitution, so as to require the State free school fund to be distributed among the counties according to the actual attendance upon the schools, rather than per capita, as now.

There has been some urgent insistence for the submission by this legislature of an amendment to the Constitution to provide for the distribution of the free school funds between the white and negro schools 18 of the state, so as to give the benefits thereof to each race in proportion to the school tax which it pays. Though it may seem a little outside of the governor's expected prerogative to speak of the matter here (in advance of legislative action on the subject), I shall, nevertheless, at the risk of being considered meddlesome, venture to express the hope that no such amendment will find approval at the hands of the legislature. Without stopping here to discuss the constitutional conflicts which would be brought about between the State and Federal Constitutions, or if it be admitted that there would be no constitutional vice in such amendment because of its class or race distinction, its effect, which would be to take school benefits largely from the negro children, would be contrary to that broad and deep philanthropic spirit that has always moved the great common heart of Christian man and womanhood in Mississippi to a love of justice and fair play toward the weak and needy, whoever and wherever they are. It must be borne in mind that the negro is our neighbor and is

here to stay; that he is the dependence largely of the white people for labor; that it is also in a great measure due to that labor that in the past the South's cotton, sugar and rice industries have brought the section's greatest wealth, and given it a commercial importance in every land and country where the nation's flag protects the American shipping. Besides, he is of our citizenship, and being of a weaker race, becomes a ward of the white people of the State, and they should not violate the trust by taking from him the benign influences of education, which help to make him a better man, a better citizen and a better Christian.

The Southern people have shown their faith in the negro by spending one hundred million dollars for his education during the past thirty years. There are now 1,750,000 negro children enrolled in the public schools of the South. The nine cotton states, where the great mass of the negroes live, that is, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas and Arkansas, had in 1860 an assessed valuation of property for taxation of \$3,244,231,406. In 1870, the valuation had decreased to \$1,830,863,180 or 43 per cent. The ability to raise money by taxation had decreased one-half. The burden of negro education had been placed upon the people of the South in their poverty. There has been murmuring at the burden in Mississippi, and efforts have been made to confine appropriations of money for negro education to the amount of money raised from negro taxation for the benefit of schools, that plan, however, has never met with popular approval. There are few a men in the South who contend that the 19 negro should be kept in an eternal state of ignorance, but their following is small.

The most convincing argument of the fairness of the South to the negro is the industrial opportunity which is afforded him. All professions and callings and all industries are open to the negro. There is absolutely no discrimination in industrial lines on account of color. The negro is at liberty to sell his power to work everywhere. The negro is not confined to menial employment. There are negroes in Mississippi who are lawyers, doctors, teachers, and a few of them are preachers. They are engaged in the various branches of the mercantile business and in all of the trades. They are blacksmiths, carpenters and shoemakers. When they can do their work as skilfully as the white man they are employed. In the professions, of course, their duties are confined to their own race.

It is a well known fact that the negro is eliminated as an industrial factor in the North by trades unionism. It may be right and this statement is not made in a spirit of criticism, but for the purpose of showing the advantages which the South offers the negro. There is a determined purpose in the South to curtail the power of the negro to vote, but he has the same chance as the white man to earn his bread.

The common every day relations between the white man and the negro are sincere and kindly. There is no persecution of the negro in Mississippi.

Rev. Edgar Garner Murphy beautifully and truthfully describes the relations between the whites and the blacks in his very able paper on "The White Man and the Negro at the South." Mr. Murphy says:

"The Northern man sees in the men and women of the weaker race a great deal of ignorance, indolence, shiftlessness, poverty and crime, but also a great deal of humble, probity of every day willingness to work, of charming good humor, of happy contentment, and of naive dependence in every emergency of life upon the white man who is supposed to hate him. He sees the stronger race with infinite generosity and with in. credible patience responding to his dependence. He sees the business man giving advice, lending money, (which he knows he will probably never see again) advancing wages and generally assuming a sort of paternal interest in the welfare of his negro hands. He sees the white man's attorney freely defending many a negro client. He sees the white man's physician freely caring for a negro patient: He sees the white man's minister befriending many a negro in illness, or need, or sorrow."

That picture should disarm all unkind, unthinking criticism of a slandered South. What an object lesson of love, and trust and faithfulness it would be if the beautiful relations existing now between the old slaves, who are rapidly passing away, and their former masters could be presented to every good man in the United States. The old uncles and aunties of the South, as the old slaves are called, have never faltered in their devotion to their "white folks" and thousands of them are being tenderly cared for in their old age by their former owners. There is not a town or a hamlet in the South where you will not find old and helpless negroes being provided with all of the comforts of life by white people simply because they were faithful servants of the long ago.

The greatest obstacle to the advancement of the negro is his defective moral nature, and that phase of negro character is the dark part of the race problem. There is a rapid increase in crime and lawlessness among negroes under forty years of age. The criminal class among negroes is confined largely to the younger generation. That question is exhaustively treated by Prof. W. F. Wilcox, of Cornell, General Statistician of the Census Office, in his very learned article on "Negro Criminality."

The people of the South do not fear the clouds which may darken the future. They believe in themselves and in their power to meet and solve the problems which the presence of the negro forces upon them. They want the Intelligent help and sympathy and good will of good men everywhere. They see the threatening clouds, but behind them they behold the brightness and glory of the future.

The negro is in the South to stay, for better or for worse, it must be his home. There is no other place in this broad Republic for him, and there is no other place where he is wanted.

The Southern people have suffered because of his presence among them. The negro has been the victim of injustice at the hands of some of the Southern people. The future is full of hope. The errors and mistakes of the past will only increase the good deeds of the future. The history of civilization teaches that all progress has come through trials and tears, and at best has moved in a path marked by many blunders and mistakes.

The South has passed through a bitter experience in the solution of the suffrage question, and no pen can adequately describe the trial, but she has borne it with dignity and fortitude and all the people of this great country should feel that the time has come when a kindly sympathy with each others difficulties would bind us nearer together and aid in solving the grave problems of the future.